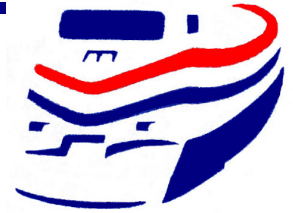


# TRAINRIDER

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THE NEWSLETTER OF TRAINRIDERS/NORTHEAST

☆☆☆ *Anniversary Edition* ☆☆☆



Help us celebrate the Downeaster's 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2007  
and  
TrainRiders Northeast's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2008!

The Downeaster will be celebrating its **Sixth Anniversary** on December 15th and according to statistics, it is often the **Number One** train in the Amtrak fleet **nationwide!** In comparing FY2007 with FY2006, the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority reports that the Downeaster experienced a 10% increase in ridership and an 8% increase in revenue.

**What a trend! All the more exciting as the Downeaster is now nearing its 2,000,000th passenger!**

We want this remarkable success to continue, and thus we are working diligently to bring about the extension of Downeaster service to Freeport, Brunswick, Lewiston/Auburn, Augusta and beyond. Someday we will be able to *ride the rails* all the way from Boston to Montreal!

All along the corridor between Boston and Portland, stations are serving expanding ridership which, in turn, is inspiring economic investment. The new green passenger train station which will serve an anticipated \$100M mixed-use redevelopment on Saco Island - described in this newsletter - makes a powerful statement of economic confidence in the future of rail in Maine. The rewarding environmental and economic benefits of expanded service beyond Portland have been well documented and deserve the exhausting but exhilarating effort that must be made to achieve them.

In 2008 TrainRiders/Northeast will honor **20 years** of dedication to its mission. TrainRiders/Northeast is a **totally volunteer organization** whose members dedicate many, many hours of time each week to the current challenges. Its engine runs solely on a fuel of dues and contributions which must pull the load of office rent, licenses, liability insurance, host program insurance, electric bills, newsletters, phones and computer - to name the major outlays.

**You can help! Please get on board.** If your dues are not current, catch up. If you can volunteer time as a train or station host or advocate, let us know. **If our endeavors to make passenger rail a permanent viable transportation option in New England match your train aspirations, PLEASE make a generous contribution to the work of TrainRiders/Northeast - an organization that has earned its voice not only in Augusta, but Concord, Montpelier, Boston and beyond.**

Gifts of appreciated stock are always welcome.



Photo Mike Duprey

## Saco Train Station Gets Final Approval

The City of Saco hopes to break ground on construction of a new train station on Saco Island sometime in December, Development Director Peter Morelli said Tuesday. The city council chose a contractor to build the station at its meeting on Nov. 19.

The project has received final site plan approval from the Saco Planning Board and the Saco River Corridor Commission. The developers of this almost \$100M mixed-use redevelopment project closed on the 14-acre property in early October.



(Image courtesy of City of Saco)

**The new passenger train station in Saco will be powered by a windmill and will be heated and cooled with a geo-thermal system.**

Now that the purchase of Saco Island is complete, the new development company, Saco Island, L.P., will pay the city \$500,000 for a parking lot almost 4 acres in size directly adjacent to mill building No. 4.

The payment for the city-owned land will go toward the \$1.2 million cost of building the new train station, according to a purchase and sales agreement the city council executed with Saco Island, L.P. earlier this year.

The 6,000-square-foot train station will include a passenger waiting room, restrooms, a ticketing machine and office space for

the Biddeford-Saco Chamber of Commerce, which has agreed to manage the station after it's built.

The station will connect with the current Downeaster train platform by a covered walkway. A 125-foot windmill will power the train station and the station will be both heated and cooled with geo-thermal energy, Morelli said.

The project architect is now putting together the final design plans, which should be ready in another two to three weeks. The city has also already held a pre-bid conference with interested contractors. Five companies have indicated they plan to bid on the construction project.

Excerpted from the Sun Chronicle

## Hurrah! US Senate Authorizes \$11.4B for Amtrak

On October 30, the U.S. Senate approved S.294, the Rail Passenger Investment and Improvement Act of 2007, on a veto-proof 70-22 margin. Several damaging amendments were soundly defeated and none was adopted.

House action is expected early next year. It is hoped that the House version will meet or exceed the Senate authorization of \$11.4B.



© Colwell 2003

**Snow was no match for the train on this winter day!**

## Be an Ambassador

In addition to all its efforts to establish and expand passenger rail service throughout New England, TrainRiders Northeast provides management for the Downeaster Train Host program.

We have approximately fifty active hosts, many living in the Portland area, but also some from Boston and other points along the route of the *Downeaster* and we are always looking for more. During the past year, train hosts completed more than 600 round trips aboard the *Downeaster*.

The purpose of the TrainRiders Host Program is to have volunteers serve as goodwill ambassadors, to promote patronage of *The Downeaster*, to assist passengers with information onboard the train, along the route and at scheduled stops to assist train crews in duties as requested by them and to promote rail safety.

The program is officially authorized by AMTRAK and the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority and it operates under the supervision and direction of TrainRiders Northeast. More information can be obtained at the Downeaster web site or by calling the host dispatcher, Jim Oikle at 207-751-9547.

### Ridership is UP!

FY 2002 – 245,135  
 FY 2003 – 254,030  
 FY 2004 – 250,028  
 FY 2005 – 274,966  
 FY 2006 – 337,921  
 FY 2007 – 361,634

**“I cannot conceive of my world without a rail connection...”** *EB White*

It's time for our Annual Appeal to commemorate the Downeaster's 6th anniversary. We've been working for nearly 20 years to return trains to northern New England and 6 years to make our greatest accomplishment to date, the Downeaster, America's number one train.

**Since it began operating, the Downeaster has:**

- Operated more than 18,000 trains
- Carried more than 1.8 million passengers
- Generated \$24 million in ticket revenue

**The Downeaster has achieved a standard of excellence.**

- It ranks among the best in the nation for overall customer service.
- It operates at one of the best on-time performance percentages in the country.
- Its ridership grew 38% from FY05 to FY07, and the first quarter of this year is already 17% greater than the same period for last year.

**The Downeaster has proven to be an economic development tool for the entire region.**

**What now?**

Maine must commit to a funding mechanism to sustain passenger rail service when **federal funding expires in June of 2009.**

Plans are underway to restore rail service from Nashua, Manchester & Concord through Lowell and Boston.

Plans are underway to expand Downeaster service through Freeport to Brunswick by the spring of 2010, and we are continuing to work at extending service to Lewiston/Auburn, Bethel, northern NH, northern VT points and Montreal.

**Your contribution or pledge will be an investment in our ongoing efforts. Thank you.**

Wayne E. Davis, Chairman, TrainRiders/Northeast

**WE CAN SUCCEED WITH YOUR HELP**

I want to help TrainRiders/Northeast and support its effort to extend Amtrak's great *Downeaster* service beyond Portland.

**Enclosed is my contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Address: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Please add me to your E-Mail communications: \_\_\_\_\_**

Please make checks payable to:

**TrainRiders/Northeast  
Box 4869 / Downtown Station  
Portland, ME 04112**

Don't forget – TrainRiders/Northeast is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Contributions may be tax deductible. Please consult a tax advisor.

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## Mark your calendar now!



TrainRiders Northeast will be hosting its 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting on Tuesday, May 13, 2008 at the Marriott Sable Oaks, and we expect it to be a glorious occasion.

Our keynote speaker will be announced when invitations are sent out early next year. Think of someone who has been instrumental in the success of the *Downeaster*; think of someone who is well-loved in Maine and world-renowned.

Join us as we celebrate this important milestone on the *Downeaster's* journey to success and express our gratitude to all who have brought us this far.

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### ***THE TRAINRIDER***

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